

Psychological and Interpersonal Issues Postpartum

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Overview

- **Postpartum Psychological Issues**
 - Postpartum Blues
 - Postpartum Depression
 - Postpartum Psychosis
- **Psychological Benefits of Postpartum Exercise**
- **Miscellaneous Postpartum Psychological Factors**

Postpartum Psychological Issues

Postpartum Blues

- Often viewed as “normal”
- Affects 40 to 85% of new mothers
- Peaks between postpartum days 3 and 5
- Resolves within 24 to 72 hours
- Subsides without treatment by postpartum day 14

Postpartum Blues

- **Symptoms:**

- **Sadness, anxiety, irritability**
- **Uncontrollable tearfulness**
- **Wide mood swings**
- **Occasional negative thoughts**

- **Primary Treatment:**

- **Supportive care and reassurance about the condition**

Clinical Depression

- **15 to 25% of the overall population**
- **< 25% under the care of a mental health specialist**
- **Twice as common in women**
- **Peak incidence during primary reproductive years (25 to 45 yrs)**

Postpartum Depression

- A more severe form of “postpartum blues”
- Affects 10 to 15% of new mothers
- Affects 26 to 32% of all adolescent new mothers
- Symptoms are more intense and longer lasting

Postpartum Depression

- **Symptoms: (DSM IV-R)**

*Must be present most of the day,
nearly everyday for more than 2
weeks postpartum*

- **Anhedonia**
- **Dysphoric mood**

Postpartum Depression

- **Difficulty concentrating or making decisions**
- **Psychomotor agitation or retardation**
- **Fatigue**
- **Changes in appetite and/or sleep patterns**
- **Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide**

Postpartum Depression

- **Feelings of worthlessness or guilt (especially focusing on failure at motherhood)**
- **Excessive anxiety**
- **Frequently focusing on the child's health**

Who is at risk?

- **Family History - especially a personal prior episode of depression**
- **Mother experiencing poor marital relationship/abusive relationship**
- **Lack of social support and/or child care stressors**
- **Comorbidities of substance abuse, anxiety or somatization disorders**

Postpartum Depression Interventions:

- **Medication**
 - For more severe or chronic symptoms
 - Prior episodes or family histories w/ good response to meds
 - Less costly and less time consuming
- **Psycho-therapy**
 - Chronic psychosocial problems
 - Incomplete response to meds
 - Concurrent personality problems
- **Combination of both**

Postpartum Psychosis

- **Rare condition, affecting 1 to 2 out of 1000 women after childbirth**
- **Presentation can be dramatic**
- **Onset as early as 48 to 72 hours postpartum**
- **Symptoms develop within the first 2 weeks after delivery**

Postpartum Psychosis

- **Early Symptoms**

- Restlessness
- Irritability
- Sleep



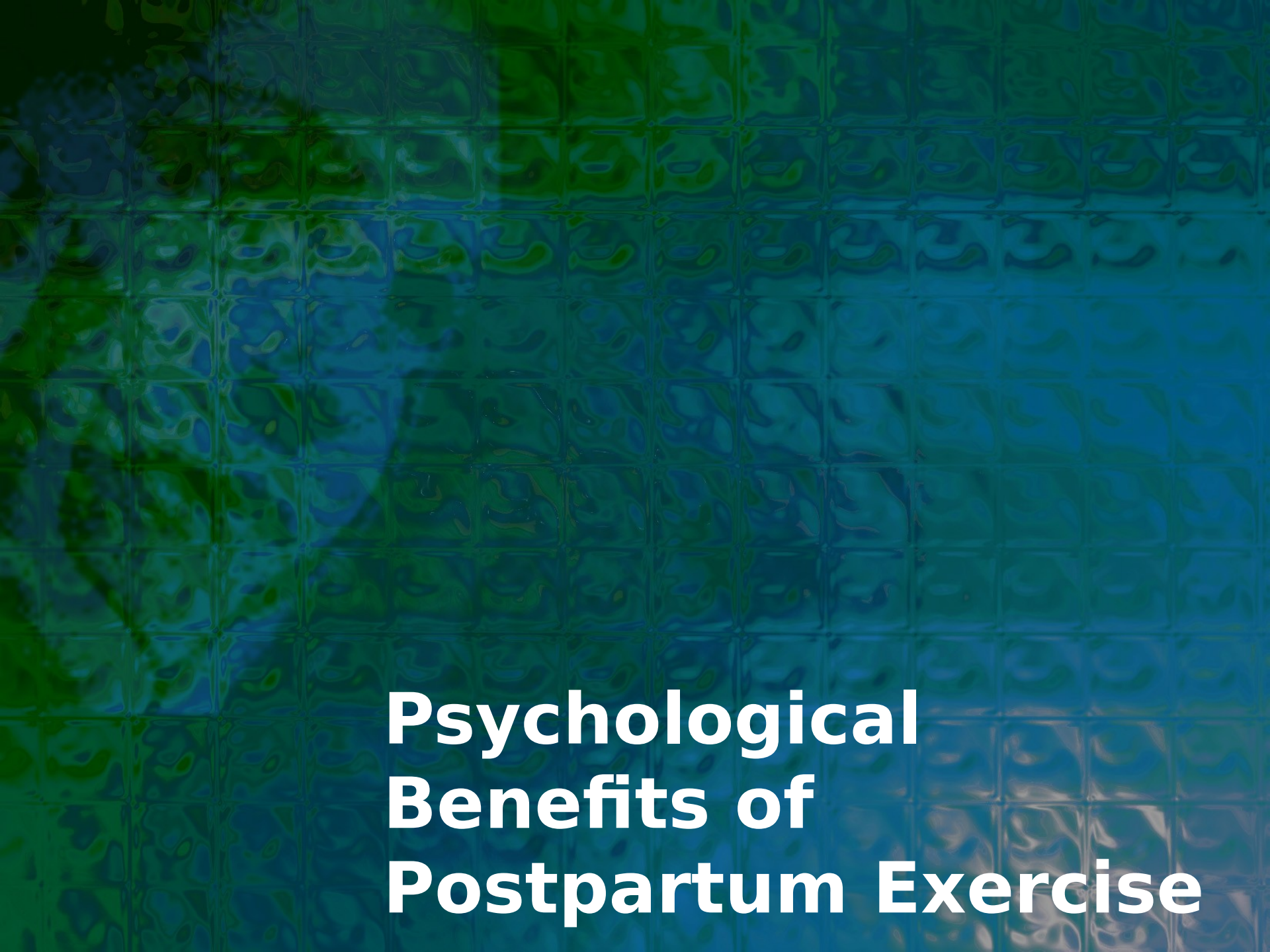
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- **Progressive Symptoms**

- Depressed or elated mood
- Disorganized behavior
- Mood swings/instability
- Delusions
- Hallucinations

When might your healthcare provider make a referral for postpartum psychological problems?

- **Thoughts of suicide or homicide**
- **Presence of psychotic symptoms**
- **Severely impaired functioning**
- **Failure to respond to anti-depressant treatment trial**
- **Comorbid substance abuse**
- **Clinician preference**



Psychological Benefits of Postpartum Exercise

Psychological & Interpersonal Benefits of Exercise for Postpartum Mothers

- Increases energy level
- Eases tension and stress
- Provides an opportunity to meet other expectant and postpartum mothers





Miscellaneous Postpartum Psychological

Bonding With Your Baby

- Your baby will be the most miraculous thing you have ever seen
- Touch is an essential part of bonding even when there are complications



Taking Care of Your Baby

- **Expect sleep deprivation**
- **Postpartum blues is common and occurs 3-5 days after birth**
- **Most women find that they are isolated during the first 2-3 months after birth**
- **The PPPT program is a great way to socialize with other postpartum mothers.**

A Word on Complicated Pregnancies

- **Medical complications during pregnancy can have an impact on postpartum psychological functioning**
 - **May increase the likelihood of blues or depression**
 - **May increase the length of postpartum symptoms**
- **In most cases, even complicated pregnancies are not associated with formal psychiatric illnesses or conditions.**

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